

# The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy  
Orthodox Church in North America

## The Frequency of Holy Communion

by The Righteous Elder Pachomius

Founder of the Skete of the Holy Fathers, Chios

Who would not weep at the ignorance and wretched state of our contemporary clergy? Where has it ever been heard, that the Christians should go to Church, seeking to receive Holy Communion, and the priests hinder them, saying to them, "Is Communion soup? Forty days have not yet passed since you received Holy Communion, and you come to receive again?"

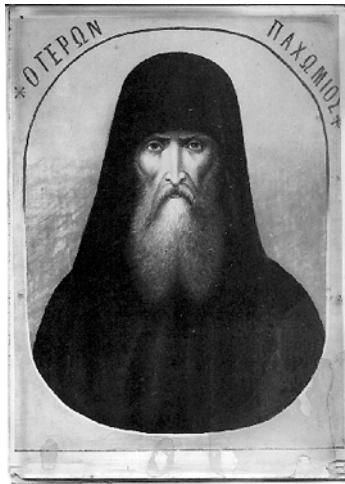
In like manner regarding the first week of the Great Lent, I know of many men and women who keep the three-day fast, [an optional tradition of fasting from food and water] and they go to church on Wednesday for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, and the clergy do not allow them to receive Holy Communion, saying, "Just the other day you were eating meat, and today you come to receive Communion?"

"And secondly," they say, "the Presanctified is for the priests, and not for the laity." Fie! on our ignorance and lack of understanding! You, on the one hand, O ordained man, are eating meat the night before, and many times you are

even drunk, and perhaps also irreverent, and you go to serve the Liturgy, and you hinder the one who has been fasting with so much reverence? And you deprive him of so much benefit and sanctification?

Do you see what lack of learning our priests have? "The Presanctified," say they, "is for the priests, and not for the laypeople." St.

Basil [the Great] says, "I commune my parishioners four times a week." [St. John] Chrysostom and the entire Church of Christ do likewise. They had this custom of Communion four times a week. And since the Liturgy is not served during the weekdays in Great Lent,



The Righteous Elder Pachomius  
1839-1905

the Holy Fathers in their wisdom devised to have the Presanctified, only so that the Christians might have the opportunity to commune during the week; and you say the Presanctified is [only] for the ordained?


And observe, O reader, that as long as this discipline prevailed, and the Christians communed frequently, their hearts were warmed by the grace of Holy Communion, and they ran to martyrdom like sheep. Therefore, the priests who hinder the Christians from receiving the Immaculate Communion should know well that they sin greatly. I do not say that the people should commune simply and indiscriminately, but that they should approach with the fitting preparation.

However, I heard what some priests say: “I” (say they) “am a priest and I serve the Liturgy frequently, and I commune, but the layman does not have this permission.” In this matter, O priest, my brother, you are greatly mistaken. Because, in the matter of Holy Communion, the priest differs in nothing from the layman. You, O priest, are a minister of the Mystery, but this does not mean that you have the right to receive frequently, and the layman does not. In this matter I can bring you many proofs from the Saints, [demonstrating] that it is permitted equally to bishops and priests and laypeople, both men and women, to partake of the Immaculate Mysteries continuously—unless they have been married a third time. As many as have married three times commune three times a year.

I have myriads of proofs concerning this issue, but which one should I present to you first? Chrysostom, Clement, Symeon of Thessalonica,

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David? As I said, which one should I mention first? In this matter, I can bring you so many proofs, I could fill a whole book! For this cause, I cut short what I am saying and tell you only this in brief. If you don't want the Christians to commune frequently, why do you hold the Holy Chalice, and display it to the Christians, and cry out from the Holy Bema, “With the fear of God, faith and love, draw near, and approach the Mysteries that you may commune”? And yet again, you yourselves hinder them, and you lie openly? Why, on the one hand, do you invite them, and, on the other, do you push them away?....



Quiet


Light

Candles

Convent of the

Meeting of the Lord

Stanwood, WA



The Convent of the Meeting of the Lord was established in June of 1999 when three sisters were transplanted to Stanwood, WA from Holy Nativity Convent in Brookline, MA. We prayed to find a cottage industry that was conducive to our monastic life and could provide the means for us to work towards being self-supporting. Hand pouring 100% pure beeswax votives and tealights, and maintaining a gift shop on our premises with a large selection of candle-holders, provided us with work that is quiet, and a product that is useful and popular.

We were very happy to also discover that burning beeswax not only smells nice, but produces negative ions that actually clean the air! The finding of this unexpected quality really added a joy to our business, as many customers enthusiastically relate to us that their asthma symptoms and difficulties in sleeping have been greatly relieved. We humbly ask your support by keeping us in your holy prayers and trying our Quiet Light candles.



Mother Evdokia and Mother Mary pouring tealights



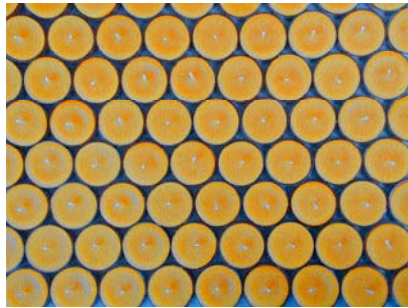
Mother Thecla preparing votives for packaging

Since 100% pure beeswax naturally has a wonderful scent and color, there is no need to add fragrances and colors. It is clean burning, sweet smelling and richly colored, all naturally. It's no wonder that beeswax was chosen above any other candle material, both as the purest offering in prayer and for use by royalty throughout the centuries.

What many people don't realize is that paraffin has only been used for candlemaking in relatively recent times. Paraffin is a by-product of petroleum processing, made from the sludge at the bottom of a barrel of crude oil and then cleaned and bleached with benzene and other chemicals. The American Lung Association has issued a warning not to burn paraffin candles as they emit not only soot, but also 11 documented toxins, two of which are carcinogenic.

Beeswax candles not only do not emit toxins, but actually capture and neutralize dust, odors, mold, bacteria and other toxins. They are especially highly recommended for use in any area where food is prepared or served.

*Excerpts from the Quiet Light brochure*



*Votives on a tray form an almost honeycomb pattern*



*Trays of candles on the cart*



*Handmade beeswax candles and soap*

VOTIVES – \$2.50 each  
Available in 2, 3, 6 and 12 packs  
TEALIGHTS  
Tealight Trios – 3 tealights – \$3  
Packages of 6 – \$5.50  
Bulk Baker's Dozen – \$11  
SAMPLE PACKS  
2 Votives & 2 Tealights – \$7  
3 Votives & 3 Tealights – \$10  
PILLARS  
4"x2" – \$10.00  
6"x3" – \$19.50  
BEESWAX SOAP  
(Scented with lemongrass)  
\$3.50 per bar

Our Gift Baskets and Boxes include a selection of homemade beeswax candles and homemade beeswax soap, raw honey, tea, honey-sweetened chocolates, and gift items from our shop. They come in a variety of sizes, providing attractive high quality gifts at very reasonable prices. We are happy to make custom baskets and boxes for any occasion.



*A sample of gift boxes and baskets*



*Mother Mary standing in our shop holding a gift basket*



*A small sample of candleholders*

The votive candles burn for 18 hours and the tealights for 4 hours! They are wonderful and safe for icon corners!

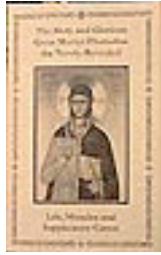
**Convent of the Meeting of the Lord**  
29206 64th Ave NW  
Stanwood, WA 98292  
Phone: (360) 629-0285  
Fax: (360) 629-6065  
quietlightcandles@orthodoxpress.org

Also available from Holy Nativity Convent (617) 566-0156 and Holy Transfiguration Monastery (800) 227-1629 (617) 734-0608  
For online ordering:  
orders@stnectariospress.com



*Mothers Mary, Thecla & Evdokia under the icon of their Patron, St. Phanurius*





**The Holy and Glorious  
Great Martyr Phanurius the Newly-Revealed**

**Life, Miracles and  
Supplicatory Canon**

*Excerpts from the recently published booklet,  
compiled by The Convent of the Meeting of the Lord.*

**MY MOTHER'S WORDS RANG CLEAR IN MY MIND**

I have two particular miracles of St. Phanurius that I will never forget that I would like to share with you. As you will see, they not only helped me out of two terrible fixes, but the greatest gift of all was that these miracles helped my wife come to an understanding about the intercessions of the Saints and eventually desire Holy Baptism.

The first time I ever called on the Saint for help was a number of years ago. We were having guests over to the house for a “Greek” dinner, and my wife had sent me, accompanied by my sister Andrea, to Costco (a whole-sale food store) for some legs of lamb. My wife sent my sister along so that I wouldn’t get sidetracked at the store. As we were driving, I noticed a field of what my mother used to call “vrouves”—wild mustard greens. I said to my sister that she had to pull the car over, to which she reminded me of my wife Lisa’s words. (To get the meat and come right home.) I scowled and said, “I don’t care! Do you see this beautiful field of greens? It doesn’t get any better than this. Besides, we’ll fill this garbage bag up, get to Costco, get the lamb and get back home and she’ll never be the wiser.” She laughingly shook her head from side to side and said, “She’s going to kill you!” As it turned out we filled up the garbage bag in no time and proceeded on to the store for the lamb.

It was at the store, in the parking lot, preparing to exit the car that I realized that I was in big trouble as my wife’s wallet/checkbook wasn’t on the console of my sister’s car where I last recalled seeing it. I tried to retrace my steps prior to stopping for the wild greens, and after rifling through the car, decided that I must have put her wallet into my coat pocket when we left the car to pick the greens. The wallet must have fallen out of my pocket—presumably in the field—as I was picking the wild greens. My sister was gleefully quick to re-inform me that my wife was going to kill me. Going into “save my skin” mode, we got back into my sister’s car and rushed back to the field, where I began systematically searching the knee high field of grass and greens to locate the lost wallet. After completing one complete grid-type sweep, which burned about three-quarters of an hour, I decided to try again. Meanwhile, my sister had abandoned the search and was gleefully leaning up against her car, periodically informing me that my wife was going to have a conniption and that I was going to “get it.” About

ten minutes had passed into the next attempt and I was coming to the desperate realization that I was going to end up going home with a bag full of weeds, no lamb and no wallet (the wallet, incidentally, contained all of my wife’s ID) with time ticking away before the dinner party. I paused from my search, standing in the middle of this huge field (about 15 acres) and racked my brain for a solution. It was then that my mother’s words rang clear in my mind, “Whenever you lose something, or something needs to be found, pray to Saint Phanurius. Of course, if you find it, you’re going to have to bake a St. Phanurius cake and give it to the poor.” Under the circumstances, baking a cake and distributing it to the poor seemed like a holiday compared to facing my wife without the meat for the main dish. I closed my eyes, did my Cross and then prayed to the Saint for help. I opened my eyes, took a deep breath, walked no more than ten feet and on the ground in front of me, on top of grass and wild greens that oddly seemed flattened down, was the wallet. I grabbed it, said a thank you prayer to the Saint, promised that I’d bake a cake and distribute it to the poor (which I did—a hilarious story in and of itself) rushed back to the store—recounting the details of the event with my sister—grabbed the lamb and high-tailed it back home. As it turned out, my wife and I had just enough time to get the food prepared before the guests came, and a great miracle to share with them as well!

**SINKING BUT NOT SUNK**

It was the summer of 2003 and I was doing some work for a retired couple by the name of McLarney that I had done handiwork for before. One of the tasks that I was commissioned to do was to patch up a wall that used to have a heat register in it. The challenging part of this task was that there was a bathroom vanity/sink partially covering the hole. This necessitated my disconnecting the plumbing sufficiently to gain enough access to execute the repair. Normally, I’d expect to spend no more than about twenty minutes on a repair of this sort, except that some joker had glued the joints of the sewage line with what I surmised to be epoxy cement. After attempting myself to loosen any of the joints (there were three) by conventional methods (e.g., pipe wrenches, vise-grips and heating), I enlisted the help of the homeowner. I decided that the joint at the top, where the sink was connected, was the most likely to loosen. I figured this as there was a large rubber gasket there and that it would have some needed “give” in it. My plan was simple; he was going to apply constant pressure to the joint using a pipe wrench while I gave it some encouragement with a hammer and chisel. To both our surprise, the sink didn’t take well at all to the idea (or the stress) and broke, very near to the joint. Now, there were some problems with this sink breaking. Firstly, the woman of the house had picked it out herself. Secondly, it was her favorite color (periwinkle blue). Thirdly, it was trapezoidal in shape, which is to say, that it was very unconventional in and

of itself, not to mention that the countertop had to be cut out to fit it. Lastly, it had a custom faucet set on it that matched the style and geometry of the sink. Needless to say, I was in big trouble.

First thing that I did was to look in the yellow pages for a distributor of that brand of sink. I gave the salesman the name of the manufacturer and the model number and waited. After what seemed like an eternity, the guy gets back on the phone and informs me that that particular model had not been in production for quite some time. Out of curiosity I then asked him what a sink of that sort would go for. He fiddled around on his computer for a minute (in his words “trying to compare apples with apples”) and then informed me that a sink of that caliber would run in the area of about three hundred dollars. My wife and I didn’t have three hundred dollars to our name at that time and I immediately felt sick because this was all going to come out of my pocket, and my pocket was nearly empty! Thinking fast, I remembered a place that dealt in recycled building materials and fixtures and decided that my best shot would be there.

Breaking the land speed record, I hustled over to the recycling center and began searching the three trailers containing the bathroom fixtures and the adjacent lots between the trailers. The first time through yielded nothing and the sick pit in my stomach was growing with time. I decided that I’d go it again, searching more meticulously this time. I carefully searched again but with the same result—nothing! To compliment my sick stomach I was now in a nervous cold sweat. Ready to give up and accept defeat, I walked from the rear of the last trailer to the front, where the doors were and just stood there staring out into the lot. It was then that St. Phanurius came into my mind. What happened next was a miracle. I had just finished my prayer and completed doing my Cross—promising to honor the Saint with the customary cake (and the subsequent distribution to the poor), when I all of a sudden had the feeling that I should turn around. I turned around and in front of me, on the trailer floor, was the exact model sink that I so desperately needed. Furthermore, it looked almost brand-new, was in excellent condition, and had a nearly new faucet set attached! I know that that sink had not been there earlier! I picked it up and took it over to the cashier to pay for it. It only cost me \$20. I felt like doing cartwheels.

Now there was one small problem, however, and that was that the sink that had been put in my way wasn’t the same color as the old sink. Truthfully, at that point I was so relieved that I really didn’t care what color it was, but out of courtesy I decided it best to call up my customer (I spoke directly to the wife) and asked her if she was going to be able to live with a white sink. Thank God she said that “she could probably get used to it.” Thanks again Saint Phanurius!

Panagioti (Peter) George Macris  
Portland, Oregon  
June 2004

I just wanted to add to my husband’s accounts how these miracles also very deeply touched my life. Having been raised a Mormon, the whole idea of iconography and praying to the Saints was a huge hurdle for me in coming to the Church and an understanding of true piety. Anyone who was raised this way, be it Mormon or Protestant, knows that one is very strictly taught that to pray to Saints is considered to be idolatry. I could not see any need to do this and the thought of it actually scared me.

Over the years I had heard many stories about the Saints helping people with various problems, but these stories were disconnected from my life and I could never imagine it happening to us. However, when the above miracles happened and I also experienced them through and with my husband, the power and grace that the Saints possess became very real to me. I remember how I sat at home drumming the counter waiting for the legs of lamb, and it was my wallet that was lost. I knew how hard Peter was working, how sick he felt when the sink broke, and how difficult a position we were in financially. And when these things happened—well, how could they be construed as anything but Divine help? I said to Peter, “Can you believe this happened to us? Ordinary people like us, who are maybe the most unworthy!” It was then that I really began to come to a realization of the grace and power that the Saints have, and that they are very close to us and answer our prayers with love. They hear even simple people like us.

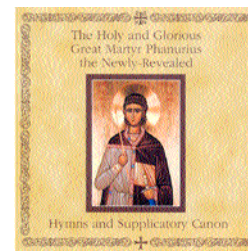
Later I learned that as we venerate the icons and relics of the Saints, we are venerating the image of Christ and the Grace of the Holy Spirit in them. Because they dedicated their lives to Christ and struggled so hard, they are given Grace by which to help us. They are role models for us, in that many times they were just ordinary people who aspired to be as close to God as possible, and now that they are, they can be our help-mates through life. We call on them to pray to the Lord for ourselves and our loved ones, and to intercede on our behalf by virtue of their close proximity to God. I will always be very grateful to Saint Phanurius for opening up the way for me to come to this understanding and helping me to find the way to salvation through Holy Baptism. (I was baptized last month, May 2004.)

Elizabeth (Lisa) Macris

Also Available

**The Holy and Glorious  
Great Martyr Phanurius the Newly-Revealed**

**Hymns and Supplicatory Canon  
on Compact Disc**



To purchase St. Phanurius booklets and CDs, please refer to the same ordering information as for Quiet Light Candles.

For the young in heart

## the sparrow

Improved version

C D C D A

Up - on the branch - es of a tree in  
Spar - row, your sing - ing pleas - es me past  
Know, O my child,\* that the one who

D A G A

blos - som sat a small spar - row sing - ing its  
tell - ing; your win - some bal - lad flows with such  
taught me this come - ly mus - ic that you now

D A G

mel - o - dy. Hear - ing such joy - ous  
grace - ful - ness. yet, now I be - seech you,  
hear me sing is the world's Cre - a - tor

A D

art ist - ry and beau - ty, there drew nigh a  
tell me who is your teach - er who taught you this  
His lov - ing grace and fa - vor taught me, His

A D

young lad, and thus spake he:  
song of such come - li - ness.  
crea - ture, this praise to bring.

\* Pronounced chai - uld.

## Diocesan Appointments

Protodeacon Fr. Demetrios and Diaconissa Panagiota (Pamela) Houlares have been appointed by His Eminence Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston to the positions of Chancellor and Director of Church School Instruction respectively. Both Fr. Demetrios and Diaconissa have spent the last thirty-five years in the field of education and human services. Fr. Demetrios was the Associate Executive Director for the Division of Child and Family Services for Community Teamwork Inc. in Lowell, MA. He was responsible for the operation of all child care, including Head Start and Early Head Start, and school-aged programs servicing more than 1,200 children from low-income families. He oversaw a budget of \$3.1

million and a staff of 225 people. He was with CTI for thirty-two years and retired in February. He was honored at a retirement party by the Agency with the naming of a 67,000 square foot facility, "The James A. Houlares Early Learning Center," that he developed in 1995.

Diaconissa Panagiota is fluent in Spanish and worked for the Boston Public School System for many years in the field of bilingual/multicultural education programs as a Coordinator, Director of

Instruction and Principal. For the past fifteen years, she has been the Principal of the Jonas Clarke Middle School in Lexington, MA., where she and her two assistant principals oversee a school community of 720 students and a staff of 115. Under Panagiota's leadership, Jonas Clarke Middle School was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education in 1992-93. For three years, she worked as a site visitor for the U. S. Department of Education.

Fr. Demetrios is a graduate of the Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology. He also holds a Masters in Education from the University of MA in Amherst. Diaconissa Panagiota is a graduate of the University of



MA., has studied at the University of Madrid, Spain, and earned a Masters of Education from Boston University.

Fr. Demetrios and Diaconissa Panagiota have been members of St. Mark of Ephesus Cathedral for more than thirty years. Diaconissa was Church School Director for a number of years. They have two children, Nathaniel, a computer engineer, and Elena, a social worker, and currently reside in Wellesley, MA.



## Saint Xenia Camp

Saint Xenia Camp 2004 was a great success, with an exciting and enriching program, complimented with varied events and activities that were enjoyed by all. This was made possible through the hard and joyous work of a wonderful volunteer staff, coming from many locations. St. Xenia Camp 2004 saw a mix of veteran camp staffers along with hearty newcomers, like a group coming down from our sister parishes in Toronto. May our Lord bless all who labor for St. Xenia Camp, sacrificing their time and applying their talents and energies in providing for an enriching and memorable experience for our Orthodox youth.

With the blessing of Metropolitan Ephraim, we are launching the 2005 camp registration process with a new on-line system, made possible through the generous support of our friends in Toronto. Campers are encouraged to register early, as this enables camp planners to secure necessary resources. For camp registration and information, please see:

St. Xenia Camp website: [www.homb.org/stxeniacamp](http://www.homb.org/stxeniacamp)  
 Or Contact: Presbytera Victoria Fleser  
 vikkif@homb.org  
 (617) 323-6379

**Camp dates: August 14-20, 2005**



*George Kordan receives a blessing from Metropolitan Ephraim*



*Fr. John Knox joins in a game of football*

## Becoming a Sponsor

The camp experience in 2004 was made possible for a number of indigent campers through the sponsorship of generous benefactors, in the spirit of Christian almsgiving. If you would like to become a sponsor, enabling a child who may otherwise be unable to participate in this wonderful experience, please send a \$350 check earmarked "camp sponsorship" to:

HOMB  
 Attn: Presbytera Victoria  
 1476 Centre Street  
 Roslindale, MA 02131-1417

Direct contributions of any size are also welcomed and accepted for the camp operating fund at the above address.

May St. Xenia guide our efforts and bless  
 all who labor for and contribute  
 to the camp that carries her holy name!



## Pictorial Visit to Africa, 2005

by Hierodeacon Barsanuphius



*Metropolitan Makarios and Hierodeacon Barsanuphius with Deacons Joseph, Charalambos and newly ordained priest, Father Amos in St. John of Kronstadt parish*

Metropolitan Makarios and I arrived in Nairobi on Jan. 26/Feb. 8. The next day there was a Divine Liturgy at St. Philaret Catechetical Centre in which Amos was ordained to the diaconate, and Deacon Charalambos was received under the Omophorion of Metropolitan Makarios. At the Divine Liturgy in St. Nectarios parish on Jan. 31/Feb. 13 Joseph was ordained Deacon and Fathers Paul and Barnabas became Father Confessors. On the following day we left for Uganda.



Funds from the Missionary Society are being used to help Phyllis and Naomi who are very active members of the St. Philaret parish. Phyllis is being trained on computers and will assist Fr. Paul with secretarial work. Naomi takes care of children at the small school at St. Philaret. When funds are available she hopes to get a degree in education.

In Uganda we visited the Golomolo Children's Home and Orphanage. It was founded in 2000 by Vincent, a retired civil engineer. His conscience was deeply troubled because he saw so many destitute orphans and youth on the streets of Kampala. Currently there are 180 orphans being housed and fed, very rudimentarily, and formal education is provided for 267 children. All of them have AIDS, and some are HIV / positive. Money for food is always a question, often slighting other needs.



*Father Deacon Joseph being made priest at St. Mark of Ephesus parish, Zigoti*



## A Memorial Chapel to St. John of San Francisco

In our Orthodox homelands many pious faithful built private chapels to memorialize a saint or to fulfill a vow. Such chapels would be used for private prayers frequently and liturgized in only a few times a year. In 1999, Dr. Vassily Mihailoff and his wife Mary built a beautiful chapel attached to their home in Kennebunk, ME, and dedicated it to St. John Maximovitch of Shanghai and San Francisco. Since the building of the chapel, Divine Liturgy has been served each year on the feast day of St. John, June 19/ July 2, with clergy visiting from neighboring parishes and Holy Transfiguration Monastery. On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the chapel, Divine Liturgy was served on the feast day of St. John and was a cause of much rejoicing for the many guests present.

The Mihailoff's family connection to St. John is traced to Vassily's father, Paul Mihailoff, who was raised in St. Tikhon's Orphanage in Shanghai. St. John continued to maintain contact with the Mihailoffs well beyond their emigration to the U.S. in the mid-1950's, and whose holy prayers and intercessions have helped the family through many trials. Also, Dr. Mihailoff's godmother, Anastasia Artemiova Titov, was a member of St. John's supportive staff in Shanghai, working zealously to aid Vladyka John in his efforts to facilitate the emigration of many Russians out of China during difficult times. Mrs. Titov now lives in Houston, Texas, and has made the annual "pilgrimage" to Maine for the last five years to attend the festive Divine Liturgy. Last year, she experienced an extraordinary miracle, being cured of serious kidney failure by the intercessions of St. John. This year, Mrs. Titov presented as a blessing to the Mihailoff family a small "*molitvonik*", (prayer book), that was given to her and signed by St. John.



*St. John visiting the Mihailoff household in 1958, on the occasion of Vassily and Vladimir's third birthday. Next to Vladyka are Peter and George, older brothers of the twins.*

## Authority and Unity

[slightly edited]

Serge S. Verhovskoy

Unity is of the essence of Christianity. We are not Christians if we live by ourselves. If a Christian community considers itself as independent and separated from the Church, is it not a sect? An independent parish is merely a secular corporation with religious purposes rather than a real parish.

What is the difference between them? A corporation is organized by a group of men in accordance with a statute which they make for themselves with the approval of civil authority. Consequently, the whole life of a corporation is ruled by the will of the majority of its members and the statute established by the same majority. If they recognize the authority of the Church, or its teaching and laws, they do so only insofar as they desire.

Some "independent parishes" pretend that they cannot accept the Statute of the Church because they are bound by their own statutes. This pretence is utterly hypocritical because every religious corporation can change its statutes so as to bring them into harmony with the Canons of the Church. If they do not want to do this, they only prove their bad will.

Christians who openly and consciously recognize only part of the authority and teachings of the Church, while rejecting the rest, are clearly heretics or at least schismatic.

Those who do not recognize the guidance of the Clergy, or who arbitrarily limit it to the celebration of the services and personal relations with laymen are openly rebellious against the Church. If the members of these religious corporations are afraid of being deprived by the Clergy of their property or legitimate rights, they are wrong. Nobody denies that the property belongs to the parishes, and the Clergy can only control its use in agreement with the parish meetings and councils.

We stress that the holy canons of the Orthodox Church energetically protect the laity from all possible abuses by the Clergy. Separatist tendencies among the laity, and even in the priesthood, were already known in the early Church and many Canons threatened them with excommunication.

The true parish must have a consciousness of being an organic part of the Church, to be the Church as it exists in a given locality. A truly Orthodox Christian community will never oppose its diocese or the rest of the Church. It will freely and gladly accept the authority of the Church and Orthodox Christian tradition in its entirety. Among other things, it will accept the guidance of the clergy. A truly Orthodox Christian parish will not be pervaded by the spirit of indifference and selfishness, but will wholeheartedly participate in the life of the Church and support it.

If there is mistrust among the laity, clergy and central administration, this mistrust must be overcome as soon as possible. If there are some weak

points in the central organization, they must be discussed in a practical and concrete form without generalization or exaggeration, with sincere desire to improve the life of our Church. This means movement toward improvement must be not only practical, but must also be free of all contradictions with our Faith. We must fight wrong ambitions and secular spirit in certain sections of the laity, but we must also rejoice in and encourage all expression by the laity of their desire to work for the Church and to take responsibility for its life. We can fight the defects of the Clergy or Church organization, but we must sincerely accept the necessity of the hierarchy, the unity and the central organization of the Church, so long as it adheres to the Orthodox Christian Faith.

Unity and order are badly needed in our Church. Every layman, priest and bishop, every parish and diocese, must have a clear consciousness that they are living members of the whole Orthodox Church in America and they must do their best to make Orthodoxy in this land united, spiritually strong and influential. Every layman, priest, and bishop, every parish and diocese must realize that all of them have their own rights, duties, and responsibilities, but that these rights are determined and limited by the Church.

The highest value belongs to the Church in its unity, then to the dioceses, then to the parishes and finally to each Christian individually. The highest authority belongs to the episcopate, then to the priesthood and finally to the laity. If the laity considers itself to be on a higher level than the Clergy and if the parishes separate themselves from their dioceses and consider themselves higher than the Church, we are then no longer in the Orthodox Church but in a sectarian society.

The laity are not deprived of their rights. They have the widest possibilities of being active in the Church in its administration, educational and welfare endeavors, in its social work and finances; they can be active members of their parish and diocesan assemblies. They are deprived of but one right: to act against the Hierarchy, provided the latter does not violate the teaching and laws of the Church.

The vitality of our Church is great. The possibilities are almost unlimited. There is no reason to be pessimistic. The only conditions for the continuous growth of our Church are a good will and an absolute faithfulness to our Orthodox Faith.

*Reprinted from the November 1959 Journal in Holy Trinity Cathedral Church Life, October 1964*

## Fortieth Anniversary of Ordination

On the fifth Sunday of Great Lent, 2005, Metropolitan Ephraim served Divine Liturgy at Holy Wisdom Orthodox Church in Catlett, VA. This Liturgy marked the fortieth anniversary of ordination for the parish rector, Archpriest Michael Lightfoot, who also serves as chaplain for the nuns at the Hermitage of St. Mary Magdalene in Warrenton, VA. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1965 by Archbishop Antony Bashir at St. Luke's Cathedral in Los Angeles. Father Michael was born on February 10, 1927 in Barnhart, TX. From 1944-52 he served in the US Army and was discharged as 1st Lt, Field Artillery. He married Presbytera Helen in 1953.



Their elder daughter is Mother Myraphora at Holy Nativity Convent in Brookline, MA; the younger one is Mother Eirini at the Hermitage of St. Mary Magdalene.

Father Michael attended public schools in Pecos, TX and Los Angeles, CA; studied Physics at Texas Tech and MIT; received his MS in Information Technology from the University of Maryland in 1990; and worked on his PhD at George Mason University, VA from 2001-04. He retired from Computer Sciences Corporation in 1992, worked for the Institute for Defense Analyses till 1995, then served on the technical staff of Performance Engineering Corporation until May 2001.



*Metropolitan Ephraim and clergy gathered at Holy Wisdom Orthodox Church to celebrate Father Michael Lightfoot's fortieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood*



### About Our Logo *A Divine Confirmation*

*The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.*

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## THE DIOCESE NEEDS SUPPORT

“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward*, although delivered free of charge to all members of our Church, is in need of your support.